



Refugees Company for Crafts and Design

CUCULA - A REFUGEES COMPANY

CUCULA is a pilot project which empowers 5 refugees to build their future. CUCULA an association, workshop, education program and meeting place. The focus is on direct action, creating a welcome culture and empower refugees to build a solid perspective based on self-efficacy.

THE IDEA

As the refugees build Design Classics, which integrate artifacts from their journey over the Mediterranean, they express both their own history and their vision of a self-determined future. In order to open up a professional perspective and to engage in a proper education, the young men need a residence and a work permit. The furniture sale will help pay five scholarships, which are an important step towards legal residence.

WHO ARE THE FIVE TRAINEES?

The participants are from West Africa, from Niger and Mali. They left their home countries as war and drought fundamentally destroyed their chances for a future in their own countries. They have survived a murderous boat trip over the Mediterranean, via Lampedusa and Italy, ultimately immigrating into Germany. They would like to stay and make a life in Berlin.

CUCULA wants to help these refugees break with the notion of 'victimhood' and at the same time unfold their self-efficacy and open up a perspective for a self-determined life.

THE EDUCATION

In the last couple of months, CUCULA has established its own workshop, a lively 'production environment' run together with designers and tutors. It is here, between the poles of African and European culture, that unique design furniture is taking shape, accompanied by education in the areas of woodwork, construction and planning. 'CUCULA Education' also offers academic classes, including language training and legal advice as well as additional support with the trainees' daily routine. Equipped with a scholarship, each refugee increases his chances for an educational visa: a stable solution which introduces an integration model with an economical spin.

THE FURNITURE

The CUCULA furniture pieces are not only design classics, they also represent the stories of their makers. The 19 DIY furniture design plans from Enzo Mari's book 'Autoprogettazione' in 1974 mark an important milestone in the history of product design. Positioned in contrast to the formalism of the time, Enzo Mari suggests the democratization of design, provoking a stronger identification with our own furniture and fostering a learning and reflection process. 40 years later Enzo Mari grants the team of CUCULA the rights to sell furniture based on his plans. A very good starting point to build a real business! CUCULA Education will now be financed through the sale of unique furniture pieces and additional donations.

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